

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNO #0407/01 3051733  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 311733Z OCT 08  
FM USMISSION USNATO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2431  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000407

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2018  
TAGS: [NATO PREL](#) [PARM MARR CZ PL MNUC](#)  
SUBJECT: READOUT: GENERAL OBERING'S 28 OCTOBER MISSILE  
DEFENSE BRIEFING TO NATO PERM REPS

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Kate Byrnes for reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Obering, the director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), stopped in Brussels October 28 to address NATO Perm Reps on his way to Warsaw and Prague. He updated Allies regarding missile defense (MD) and introduced his successor, Major General (soon to be LTG) O'Reilly. Lt Gen Obering's briefing to Perm Reps consisted of updates on the following issues: U.S. MD testing, the Iranian missile program, the integration of U.S. and NATO command and control systems, the MD budget, U.S. MD negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic, and MD international cooperation. Overall, the briefing was well received by Allies. Questions from Perm Reps focused on the threat, cooperation with Russia, and command and control. Lt Gen Obering also met with Secretary General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, the Polish delegation, and the Czech delegation.  
End Summary.

#### MD BRIEFING TO PERM REPS

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador Volker opened Lt Gen Obering's briefing to Perm Reps by making two points. First, that there is strong bipartisan commitment to MD in the United States. This was demonstrated by strong support in Congress for the 2009 MD budget. In this year's budget, DoD requested \$9.3 billion for MD and was granted \$9.0 billion. Secondly, that the U.S. is committed to MD cooperation with Russia. Ambassador Volker noted that the U.S. recently proposed a date for a MD meeting with Russia; however, Russia did not accept the date. The Ambassador stressed that the U.S. will continue to work with Russia on this issue.

¶3. (C) Lt Gen Obering began his briefing by updating Allies on recent MD tests. He stated that MDA recently had several successful tests, including a THAAD test in June 2008, an Aegis test in November 2007, and a ground based midcourse defense test in September 2007. He stressed that the success of these tests only increases confidence in U.S. MD systems. Next, Lt Gen Obering gave a brief update on the Iranian threat stating that Iran had developed a variant of the Shahab-3 missile which could reach up to 2,000 km. He also stated that Iran has a second missile, the Ashura, which can reach up to 2,000 km. In addition to acquiring/developing missiles of increasing distances, Iran's space launch vehicle test in August 2008 was significant because it tested a multi-stage vehicle. The overall test was a failure; however, it shows that Iran continues to develop longer-range ballistic missiles. Lt Gen Obering noted that NATO should be concerned that Iran is pursuing missiles with ranges at and greater than 2,000 km when Iran only needs missiles of 1,300 km in order to reach Israel and U.S. bases in the region.

¶4. (SBU) On command and control, Lt Gen Obering highlighted that the U.S. and NATO are making good progress on integration of their command and control systems. The U.S. has been successfully transferring radar data to NATO systems. The U.S. has conducted several command and control exercises, the most recent exercise being Joint Project Optic Windmill in the Netherlands. Lt Gen Obering reiterated Ambassador Volker's point that the U.S. (Democratic-controlled) Congress had been very supportive of MD and had practically fully funded the Defense Department's budget request in both 2008 and 2009. He also noted that MDA had enough funding to move forward with the MD sites in Poland and the Czech Republic. Lt Gen Obering summarized U.S. progress over the summer with Poland and the Czech Republic stating that the U.S. had completed BMD agreements with both countries and that we are currently working on a SOFA supplemental with Poland, which we hope to complete as soon as possible. Finally, Lt Gen Obering pointed out that MDA cooperates with over 20 nations, representing a growing recognition of the threat from the proliferation of missiles. He added that the Gulf States, especially Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, have recently become interested in MD.

#### DISCUSSION WITH PERM REPS

¶5. (C) Belgium and Spain asked for further information on MDA's cooperation with non-NATO countries. Lt Gen Obering answered that MDA has different levels of engagement with NATO and non-NATO countries including agreements on research

and development, cooperation on technologies for new capabilities, and co-development of systems. He specifically mentioned that the U.S. and Japan are working together to co-develop the next generation of sea based SM-3 interceptors and that the U.S. has contracts with Ukrainian companies on research, development, technology, and evaluation (RDT-E). Lt Gen Obering elaborated on U.S. cooperation with the Gulf States by saying that the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are interested in procuring missile defense systems because of the threat from Iran. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have requested a MD analysis to determine which MD systems they should procure, and Kuwait has asked for radar information. Lastly, that the U.S. is working with Israel on a co-development project to address short-range threats.

¶6. (C) Belgium and France asked for details regarding the meeting the U.S. proposed to Russia, and Denmark asked if the U.S. had given any more thought to using the Russian radar in Azerbaijan (Gabala). Lt Gen Obering commented that the Russians passed the U.S. a list of 40 questions regarding the U.S. proposed Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) and that the U.S. recently completed a briefing with the answers to these questions. Ambassador Volker added that the U.S. offered the Russians November 6 as the next MD meeting date to discuss all of the TCBMs, but that the Russians had refused the date. He noted that the Russians continue to pose questions, the U.S. answers the questions, and then the Russians come back with more questions. The Ambassador added that Russia made a miscalculation by offering to cooperate with the U.S. on MD; that Russia was never interested in cooperation and had calculated that the U.S. would not accept, but they are now on the record as having offered to cooperate and that is why there has been no progress. On Gabala, Lt Gen Obering said that the U.S. would welcome information from the Russian radar and that the information could be valuable to the European site, but the radar cannot replace the precision tracking radar in the Czech Republic. He noted that Russia has a radar inside its territory that could do precision tracking, but that Russia has not offered it.

¶7. (C) Latvia asked for more detail on the Iranian threat, Romania asked about the threat from Syria, and France asked for an assessment on worldwide threats. On Iran, Lt Gen

Obering stressed that it is hard to determine when Iran will develop long-range missiles because we do not know how much foreign assistance it is receiving although we know Iran receives assistance from North Korea. Lt Gen Obering also noted that Syria has made advances on missile technology, particularly with the ability to maneuver warheads so they are not ballistic. Lt Gen Obering added that MDA is looking at systems to address this. In terms of the worldwide threat, Lt Gen Obering said that North Korea is willing to sell to about anyone and this kind of access to missiles is a major problem. This also leads to the problem of non-state actors having access to missiles, for example Iran and Syria selling missiles to Hamas. Lt Gen Obering pointed out that Allies should be thinking about future threats (beyond Iran) and that a MD system should be able to address future threats.

¶18. (C) The Netherlands and Canada inquired about how U.S. and NATO command and control would work together. Turkey asked about U.S. policy regarding the protection of territory vs. protection of high value assets. Lt Gen Obering said that the U.S. wants to take data from the radar to be placed in the Czech Republic, as well as data from other radars (Aegis, etc), and feed this data to NATO command and control systems. He added that it is also important to share mission planning data. Additionally, he mentioned that the U.S. could coordinate the long-range interceptor execution plans with Allies. On U.S. protection strategy, Lt Gen Obering answered that the U.S.'s policy is to protect all U.S. territory; however, the U.S. does not have enough short-range systems to protect all of its territory. He added that he believes that the U.S. would follow its post 9/11 strategy, which was to protect major population centers.

¶19. (U) The Secretary General (SYG) closed the discussion on MD by thanking Lt Gen Obering for all of his work on MD and inviting MG(P) O'Reilly to continue close cooperation with NATO.

-----  
BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS  
-----

¶10. (C) Lt Gen Obering's bilateral discussion with the SYG focused on the way forward on NATO MD. The SYG began the discussion by asking about MD's importance in a new U.S. administration. Lt Gen Obering responded that he believed

even an Obama administration would support MD; that Obama had previously made negative remarks on MD, but had since backed away from such remarks. Then the discussion moved to NATO MD when Lt Gen Obering said that NATO should move away from the concept of "full coverage". He stressed that NATO should focus on the most imminent threats (Iran-Syria) to minimize cost. He added that NATO can expand the system later if needed. Lt Gen Obering suggested land based SM 3 systems as a cost effective solution for NATO. Lt Gen Obering also offered to host a command and control exercise for NATO; the SYG agreed this would be a good idea.

¶11. (C) The Polish Ambassador was on his way to Afghanistan so Lt Gen Obering met with the Polish Defense Advisor Piotr Wlodarski. The discussion focused on Obering's trip to Poland (10/29-10/30). Wlodarski thanked Lt Gen Obering for all his support in facilitating the BMD agreement with Poland. Lt Gen Obering asked what MDA could do, while in Poland, to help with ratification. Wlodarski replied that he did not believe ratification in Poland would be problematic, but that additional types of U.S.-Poland cooperation, like defense modernization, was good for political support of MD. He also stated that Poland would continue its bilateral dialog with Russia on MD.

¶12. (C) Lt Gen Obering's discussion with Czech Ambassador Fule centered on Czech domestic politics and the chances of the BMD agreement's ratification. Ambassador Stefan Fule stated that if the Czech Parliament remains strong, the BMD agreement has a chance of passing. The Ambassador also

mentioned that opposition leader Jiri Paroubek was problematic; that Paroubek did not believe in the Iranian missile threat and had said that Iran would have to do something more "visible" to change his mind about missile defense. Ambassador Fule concluded the conversation by saying that we need to keep up momentum on NATO MD, that this was important for Czech ratification, and that he hoped MG(P) O'Reilly would help with this.

END  
VOLKER